

Report of the evaluation of the second year of data from the implementation of Caring Communities:

The Status of Caring Communities June, 1998

Progress in Caring Communities

Findings from the 1998 Evaluation

Results from Caring Communities neighborhoods and schools which have been in operation since the Fall of 1996 indicate that:

CORE RESULT #1: Parents Working

- ❖ The earnings of the average worker are 77% of the earnings of workers in other communities in the state.

CORE RESULT #2: Children and Families Safe

- ❖ Out of home placements because of abuse or neglect have increased 3% since FY96 compared to a 5% increase in other communities in the state.
- ❖ Hospitalizations due to injuries declined 2% between CY95 and CY97 while increasing 2% in other communities in the state.
- ❖ New cases of delinquency decreased 9% between FY96 and FY98 compared to 10% increases in other communities in the state.
- ✓ Instances of repeat cases of delinquency (which are rare) decreased 4% during this time while remaining stable in other communities in the state.
- ❖ Suspensions from Caring Communities schools where data are available for both the 1997 and 1998 school years indicates a 35% increase in suspensions

CORE RESULT #3: Children and Families Healthy

- ❖ Preventable hospitalizations decreased 6% between CY95 and CY97 in Caring Communities neighborhoods while decreasing only 2% in other communities in the state.
- ❖ Out of home placements for mental health reasons declined 11% between FY96 and FY98 in Caring Communities while declining 3% in other communities in the state.
- ❖ 40% of children seeking to register for kindergarten lacked one or more immunizations at the time of registration (among schools reporting)

CORE RESULT #4: Children Ready to Enter School

- ❖ 85% of the students assessed for kindergarten were considered ready for school (among schools reporting)

CORE RESULT #5: Children Succeeding in School

- ❖ Students retained in grade decreased 11% between SY97 and SY98
- ❖ Among the schools that had comparable data for SY97 and SY98:
 - ✓ 66% report an increase in math scores

- ✓ 68% report higher reading scores

CORE RESULT #6: Youth Ready to Enter Productive Adulthood

- ❖ Dropout rates in the three reporting high schools all declined
- ❖ Pregnancies among 15-17 year olds declined 4% in Caring Communities between CY95 and CY97 compared to less than a 1% decrease in other communities.

Caring Communities seeks to improve results for children and their families by changing the organization, financing, and governance at the state, community, neighborhood, and school levels. It is a collaborative effort involving seven departments of the State of Missouri, 18 Community Partnerships, and almost 100 Caring Communities.

As a collaborative effort, Caring Communities is an initiative focused on results instead of a program focused on strategies. Each of the Caring Communities seeks positive changes in six core results. They seek to increase:

- Parents working
- Children and families safe
- Children and families healthy
- Children ready to enter school
- Children succeeding in school
- Youth ready to become productive adults

This report focuses on the progress within the seven Community Partnerships that were in operation in the Fall of 1996. Because data are available for more than one year from these partnerships, it is possible to see the changes that are taking place from one year to the next.

During the Fall of 1996 and Winter of 1997 these seven Community Partnerships and the five stage agencies who were partners at that time worked to agree upon a set of benchmarks which would mark changes taking place in the areas of the six core results. The seventeen benchmarks which were chosen were felt to be:

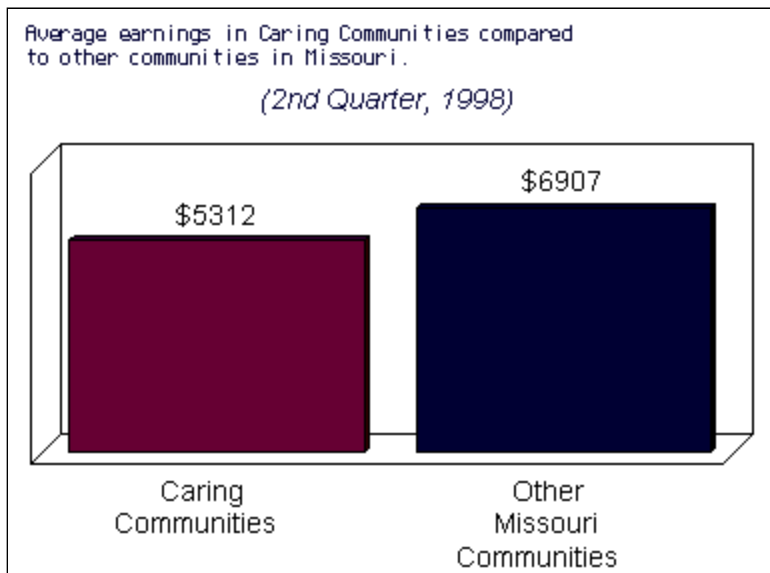
- **Compelling** – There was strong reason to believe the benchmark measured progress in a core area.
- **Available** – Data were already being collected, or could easily be collected, to measure the benchmark. In many cases the necessary data were already maintained by one of the collaborating state agencies.
- **Non-intrusive** – The data could be collected without little interruption to the initiative

Because the partnerships monitor a common set of benchmarks in each of the six core areas, it is possible to see what changes are taking place across the several Community Partnerships and their Caring Communities.

The seven Community Partnerships operating in the Fall of 1996 consisted of sixty-two Caring Communities. In the 1998 school years the schools where these Caring Communities were based enrolled approximately 27,500 students.

CORE RESULT #1: Parents Working

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations provides information on the number of people employed, their average earnings, and their retention in the labor force. In the second quarter of 1998, which was the last quarter of the fiscal year, the average worker living in a Caring Communities neighborhood earned an average of \$5,312 during the three month period. Workers living in other communities in the State of Missouri earned an average of \$6,907. Put in perspective, the average worker living in a Caring Communities neighborhood earned 77% of the earnings of other workers in the state.

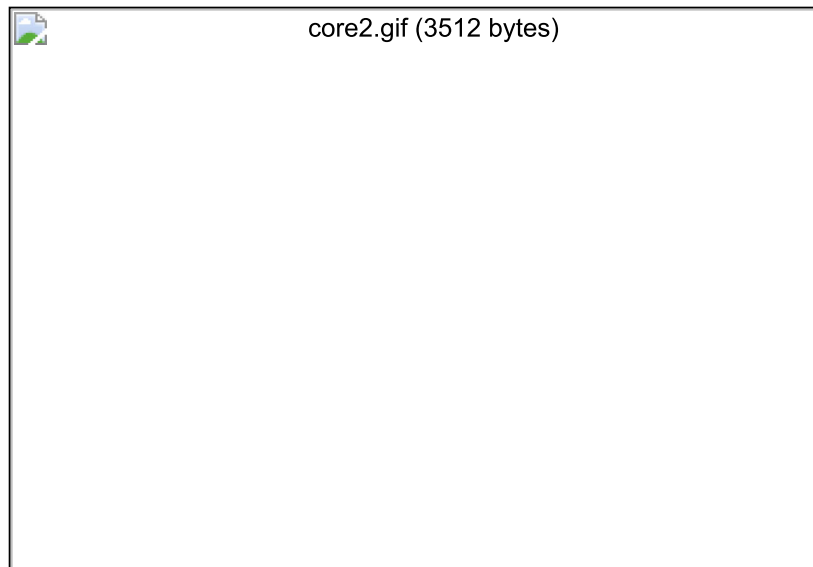


In future years, as these benchmarks are followed, it will be possible to see:

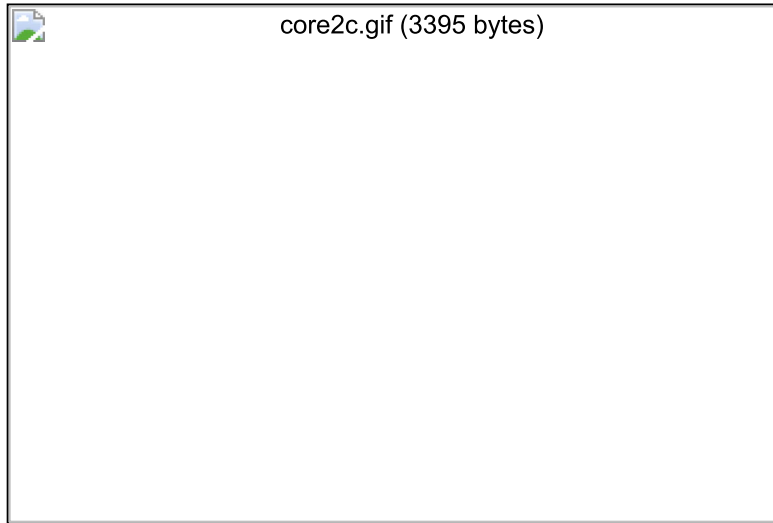
- ✓ Whether the number of persons employed increases in Caring Communities neighborhoods relative to other communities in the state.
- ✓ Whether the earnings of employed persons living in Caring Communities increases relative to other communities in the state.
- ✓ Whether persons in Caring Communities increase their retention of employment relative to other communities in the state.

CORE RESULT #2: Children and Families Safe

Information provided by the Department of Social Services indicates that during the 1998 fiscal year there were 1,938 substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect. This amounts to 21% of all cases in the State of Missouri.



Substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect have declined throughout the State of Missouri and in Caring Communities since the 1996 fiscal year. As can be seen in the graph, cases of substantiated child abuse or neglect have declined 15% in the past two years within Caring Communities and have declined about the same in other communities in the state.



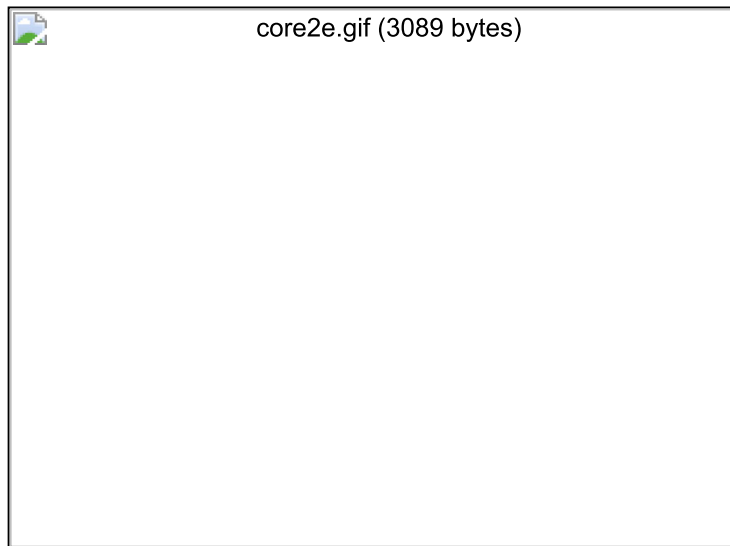
During the 1998 fiscal year, 1,517 children in Caring Communities were removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect. This was 23% of all cases in the State of Missouri.

Out of home placements because of abuse or neglect have risen since the 1996 fiscal year throughout the State of Missouri, including Caring Communities. However, the increase in Caring Communities neighborhoods is less than in other communities. Out of home placements have increased 3% in Caring Communities, compared to an increase of 5% in other Missouri communities.



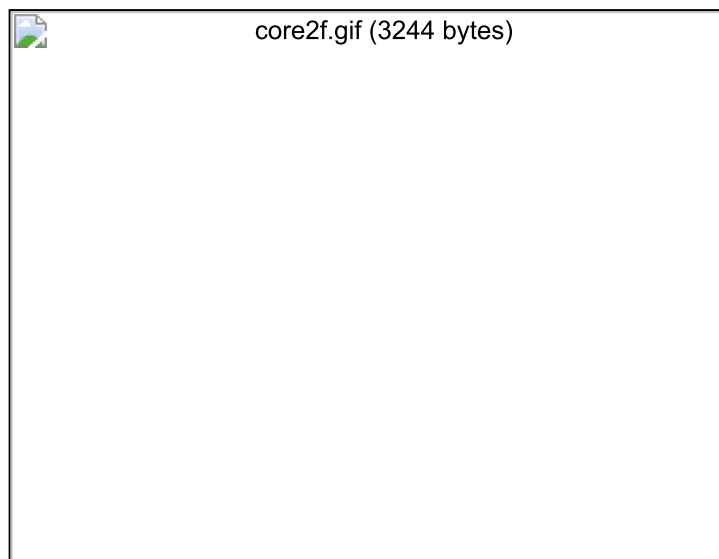
The Department of Health provides information about hospitalizations due to injuries. Inclusion in this category does not necessarily mean that the person was kept in the hospital; it only means that a hospital record was created. For example, it could be that the person came to the emergency room or was sent by a doctor for an x-ray. For whatever reason, it does indicate that an injury took place.

Between the calendar years of 1995 through 1997, the number of injuries to persons younger than 18 increased by 2% throughout the State of Missouri. During this same period of time, injuries to children and adolescents under 18 living in Caring Communities decreased 2%. While positive changes were taking place in Caring Communities, injuries were increasing in other places.



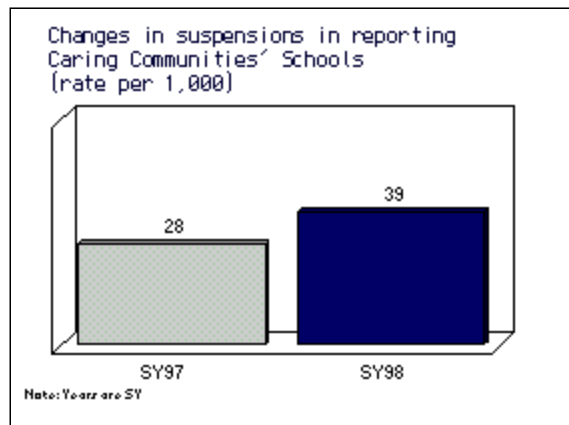
The Department of Social Services indicates that in the 1998 fiscal year, 1,225 youths entered the custody of the Division for Youth for the first time. 236 of these youth, or 19%, were from Caring Communities.

Since the 1996 fiscal year, the number of youths from Caring Communities entering the custody of Division for Youth for the first time has declined. It declined 10% between 1996 and 1997 and remained at the level in 1998. During this same period of time, the number of youths from other communities entering the Custody of Division for Youth has increased 5% each year. Consequently, since the 1996 fiscal year, delinquency resulting in Division for Youth custody for the first time has decreased 9% in Caring Communities while increasing 10% in other communities.



Very few youths are returned to the Division for Youth after the first time—less than 100 a year throughout the state. For that reason, only a few persons can cause a major change in percentages. As seen in the graph, patterns tend to fluctuate from year to year.

The number of youth from Caring Communities who were returned to the custody of the Division for Youth declined from 45 to 33 between the 1996 and 1997 fiscal years and increased to 43 in 1998. In other communities the number first increased from 87 to 93 and then decreased back to 87. At the end of this period, there is a decrease of 4% in Caring Communities while no increase is shown in other communities.

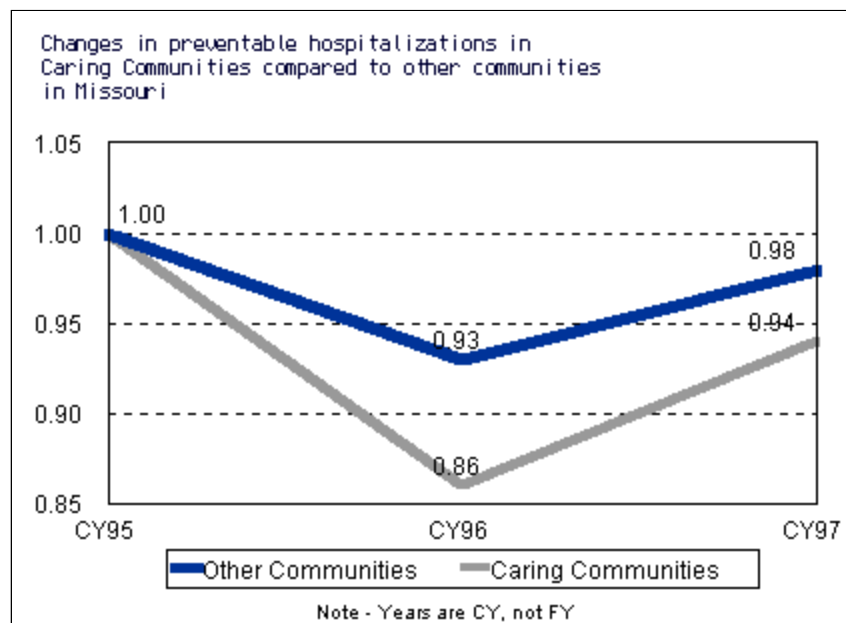


Caring Communities schools provide information about the number of students who are suspended each year. These suspensions may be in school or out of school and may be short term or long term. Not every school has provided data for both the 1997 and 1998 school years.

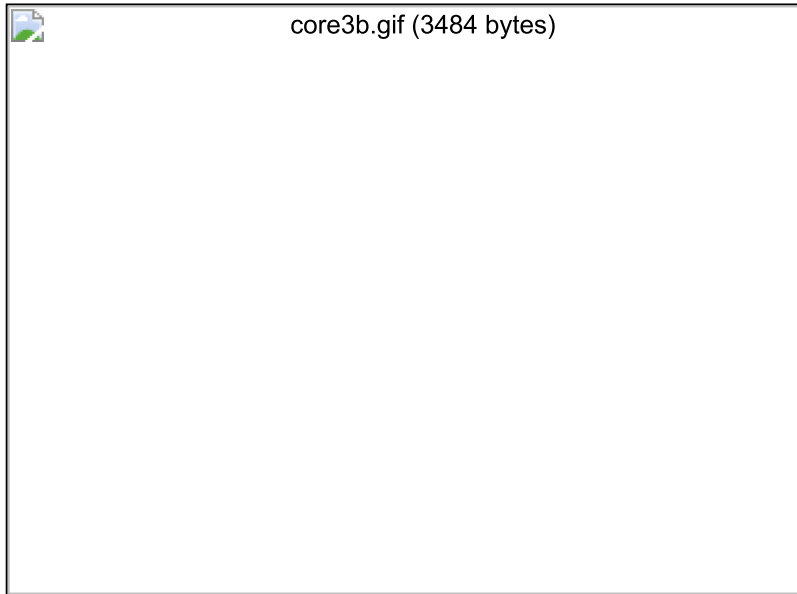
Information from schools that provided data for both the 1997 and 1998 school years indicates that the number of suspensions have increased. In the 1997 school year, an average of 28 suspensions took place for every 1,000 students enrolled. This increased to 39 per 1,000 in the 1998 school year—an increase of 35%

CORE RESULT #3: Children and Families Healthy

Some contacts individuals have with hospitals are considered preventable. For example, a child who suffered from malnutrition or a disease for which there is an immunization could have been prevented from hospitalization if proper meals had been eaten or immunizations received. The Department of Health maintains records on cases of preventable hospitalizations.



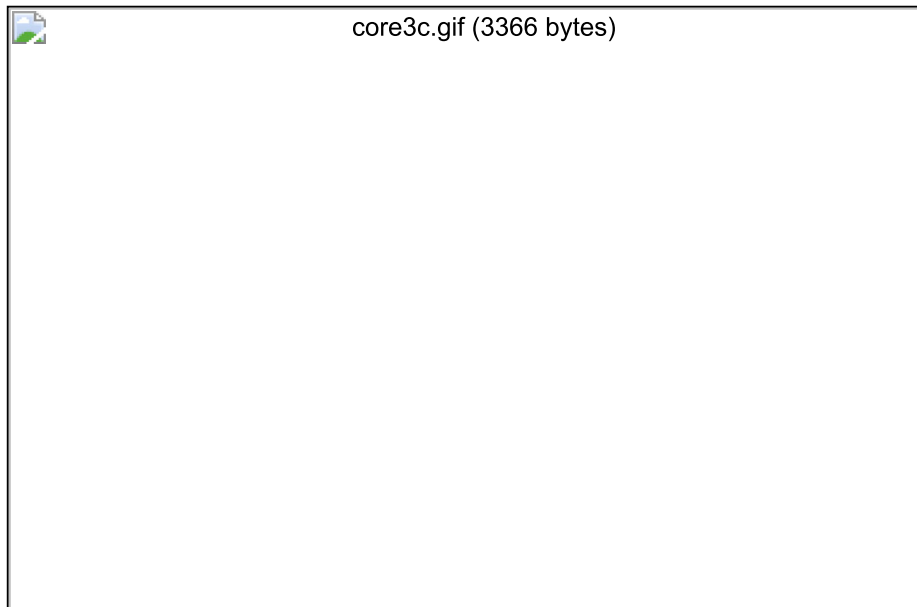
During the 1997 calendar year there were 144,251 instances of preventable hospitalizations among children and adolescents under the age of eighteen. Some 23,643 of these cases, or 16%, were to children living in Caring Communities. Since 1995 the number of preventable hospitalizations have decreased both in Caring Communities and in other communities throughout the state. Between 1995 and 1996, preventable hospitalizations decreased 14% in Caring Communities but increased between 1996 and 1997 to 94% of the level of 1995. Preventable hospitalizations in other communities also decreased between 1995 and 1996 and increased again between 1996 and 1997. However, the overall decrease in Caring Communities is three times the decrease in other communities in the state. Preventable hospitalizations have decreased 6% among children and adolescents in Caring Communities compared to only a 2% decrease in other communities in the state.



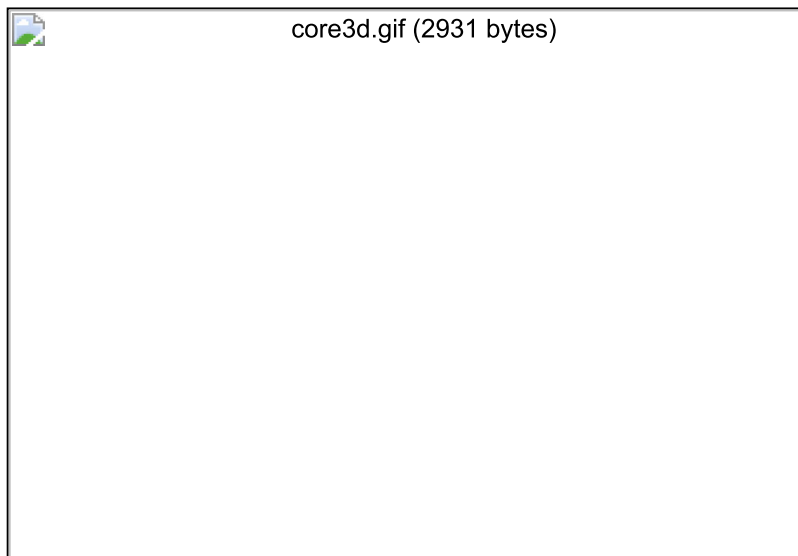
The Department of Mental Health and the Department of Social Services provide support for persons who have to be placed for mental health reasons. Information from these two departments have been combined to document changes in the number of children and adolescents under eighteen who have been placed out of their homes in the past three fiscal years.

In the 1998 fiscal year, 417 children and adolescents under eighteen living in Caring Communities were placed out of their homes for mental health reasons. This amounts to 20% of the children and adolescents who were placed throughout the state.

Between the 1996 and 1997 fiscal years, out of home placements increased 4% among children and youth from Caring Communities but then decreased in 1998 to a level 11% below the level of 1996. In other communities, out of home placements decreased 2% between 1996 and 1997 and another percent between 1997 and 1998. During this two year period, out of home placements for mental health reasons have decreased 11% in Caring Communities compared to only 3% among other communities in the state.



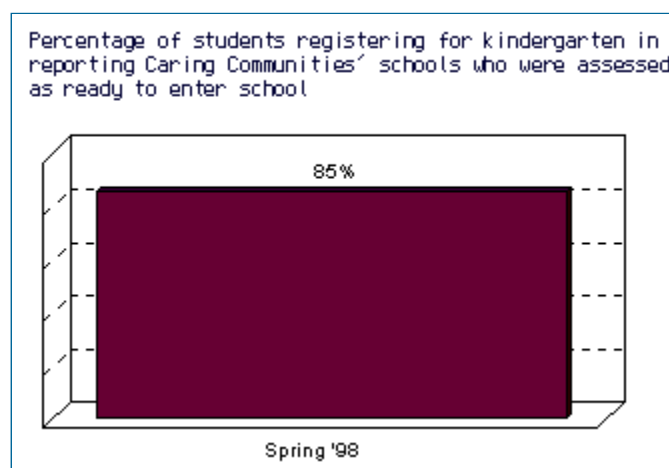
Average daily attendance in Caring Communities schools that reported for both the 1997 and 1998 school year remained constant at 90% of enrollment.



Very few Caring Communities schools in 1997 reported on the number of children seeking to register for kindergarten who lacked one or more immunization. In 1998 a much larger number of schools recorded this information. Information from these schools indicate that 40% of the children who sought to register for kindergarten beginning in the Fall of 1998 lacked one or more immunization at the time they came to register. Most of those missing immunizations needed one or more booster shots. In future years it will be possible to see changes in this rate.

CORE RESULT #4: Children Ready to Enter School

Many of the Caring Communities schools where kindergartens are held make assessments of the school readiness of entering students. Different assessments are used by different schools. Some use standardized tests while others have developed their own instruments. Some assess students as ready or not ready. Others simply use the standardized score as an indication of the level of readiness.



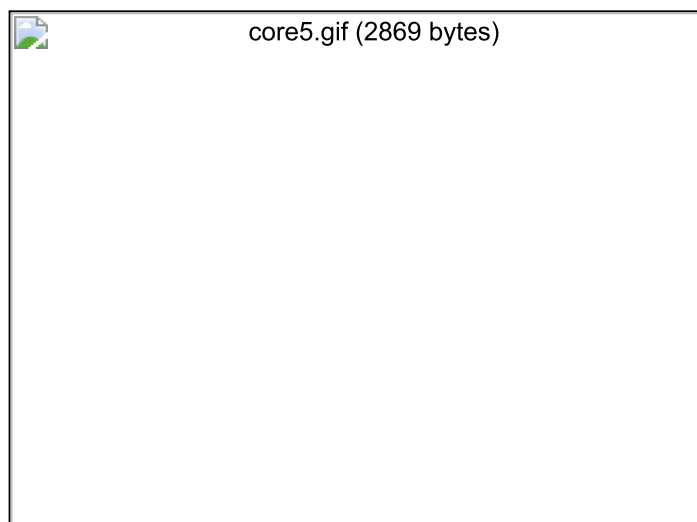
Information shown in the accompanying graph represents students who were assessed as ready or not ready or who took a standardized test for which stanine scores were available. For the latter students, those who scored in the lower three stanines were classified as not ready.

15% of the students who were assessed as ready or not ready to enter kindergarten in the Fall of 1998 were considered not ready. In future years it will be possible to see changes in this rate.

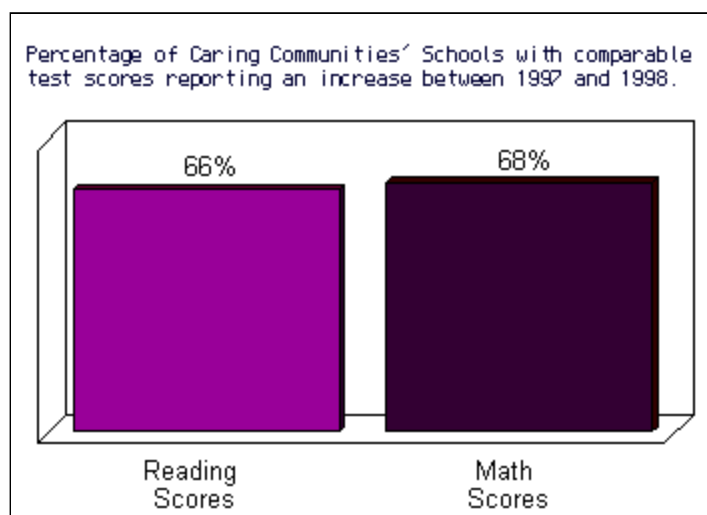
CORE RESULT #5: Children Succeeding in School

Caring Communities schools report the number of children who are not passed to the next grade at the end of the school year. Among those schools that reported this information for both the 1997 and 1998 school years, grade retentions have

decreased from 18 per thousand students to 16 per thousand—a decrease of 11%.



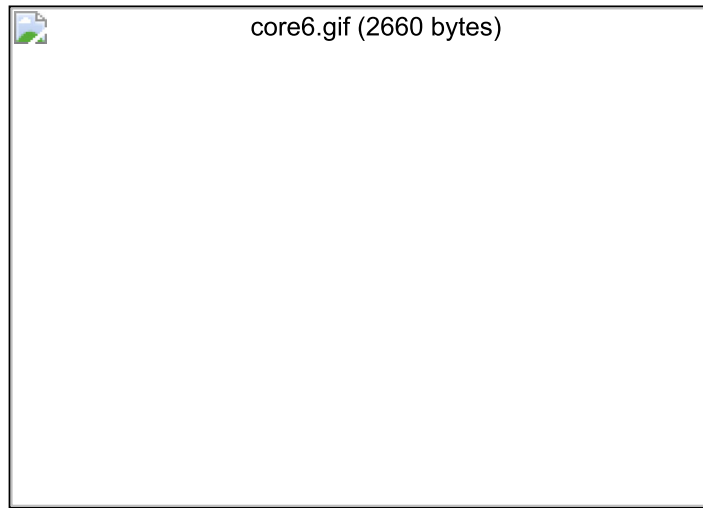
It is difficult to compare the achievements of students from one year to the next in Missouri schools. The state is currently making changes in the tests being used and individual school districts change from one year to the next. However, some of the Caring Communities schools did use the same tests in 1997 and again in 1998.



Information from these schools indicate that the average reading score went up in 66% of the schools and the average math score increased in 68% of the schools. Thus, there is approximately a 2 to 1 ratio of schools that improved performance to schools that showed a decline.

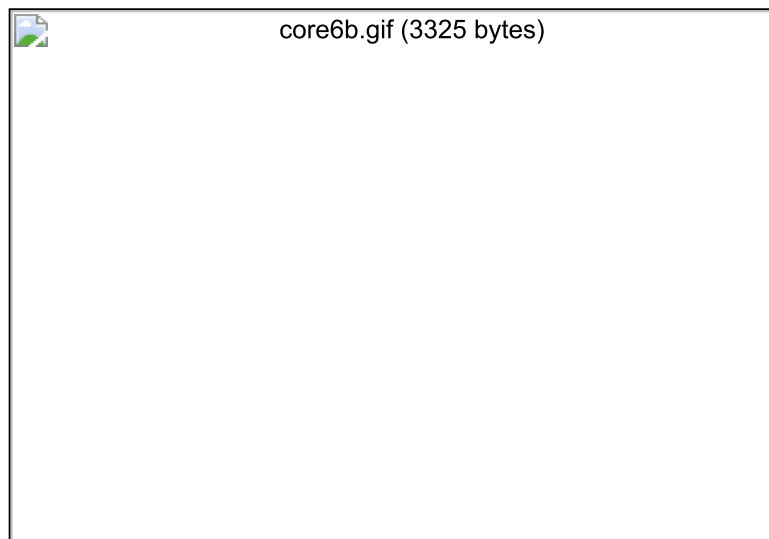
CORE RESULT #6: Youth Ready to Enter Productive Adulthood

Most of the Caring Communities are based in elementary schools. During the 1997 school year, four were in high schools. Three of those four reported the percentage of students who dropped out during the year. All three of those schools report a decrease in the percentage of students dropping out between 1997 and 1998. In 1997, 16% of the students left these schools without enrolling in another school while only 13% dropped out in 1998. This represents a decrease in the dropout rate of almost 20%.



The Department of Health maintains records on the number of persons who become pregnant. Pregnancies include persons who had a live birth or an induced abortion; they do not include spontaneous abortions.

In the 1997 calendar year 1,500 adolescent girls between 15 and 17 years old living in Caring Communities became pregnant. This represents 21% of all pregnancies to adolescents in this age group in the State of Missouri.



Between 1995 and 1997, the number of pregnancies among 15 to 17 year olds declined 4% in Caring Communities. They declined 3% between 1995 and 1996 in other communities in the state, but then increased back to their 1995 level. As a result, pregnancies among 15 to 17 year olds have declined 4% in Caring Communities while maintaining their level in other communities in the state.